

2017 Murder in Bear Sends Man to Prison for Life

Arsonist sentenced for torching historic home; other defendants enter guilty pleas in shootings

A 2017 murder resulted in life in prison for a 26-year-old New Castle man. Deputy Attorneys General Danielle Brennan and William Leonard prosecuted the case against Elder Saavedra. In March 2017, Saavedra killed 23-year-old Lester Mateo of Penns Grove, NJ outside of a dance club in Bear. Saavedra, who was escorted out of the El Nuevo Rodeo after getting into a fight with friends of Mateo, took the SUV Mateo had just parked, chased him down and struck him with the vehicle, killing him. In September 2018, a Superior Court jury found Saavedra guilty of Murder First Degree and Possession of a Deadly Weapon During the Commission of a Felony. A judge sentenced Saavedra to life in prison for murder, plus 10 years for the weapons charge. Paralegal Lisa Loikith, social worker Meghan Fisher, and investigator Guillermo Santiago assisted with the prosecution. Scott Mauchin and Kelly Diaz of the Delaware State Police were the chief investigating officers.

A Superior Court judge sentenced a Townsend man to 4 years in prison for setting fire to his home, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Deputy Attorney General Matthew Bloom secured the sentence for 42-year-old Christopher Gregg. In November 2017, Gregg argued with one of his children, trashed her bedroom, and threw her belongings out of the window. Once everyone left the house, Gregg set fire to the home, known as the Vandyke-Heath House, and a nearby barn. The fires also damaged a truck parked close by. In December 2018, a jury convicted Gregg of 2 counts of arson in the second degree and 1 count of arson in the third degree. Deputy Attorney General Amanda DiLiberto, investigator Guillermo Santiago, social worker Courtney Cochran, and paralegal Lisa

Loikith assisted in preparing and prosecuting the case.

A Superior Court jury found a Smyrna man guilty of several charges in connection to him firing a gun and damaging a car while looking for his ex-girlfriend. Deputy Attorney General Lindsay Taylor secured the conviction against Anthony Jones, 44, of 6 counts of Possession of a Firearm During the Commission of a Felony, 2 counts of Possession of a Firearm by a Person Prohibited, Reckless Endangering First Degree, 2 counts of Aggravated Menacing, Conspiracy Second Degree, 2 counts of Criminal Mischief, 2 counts of Kidnapping Second Degree, Burglary Second Degree, and Coercion. In September 2018, Jones kidnapped two individuals at gunpoint. Jones took them to a home in Marydel looking for his ex, and when he didn't find her, fired a shot that struck her camper. Jones then traveled to Felton, and unlawfully entered his ex's residence on Holly Spring Road. When he realized she was not home, he ordered one of the kidnapped victims to smash the windows and slash the tires of a car in the driveway. Jones was taken into custody a short time later when police conducted a traffic stop. Officers searched the car in which Jones and two others were riding, and found a loaded .45 caliber gun. Jones, prohibited from having a firearm because of previous drug convictions, will be sentenced by a judge in May. Social worker Esther Powell assisted with the case and Detective Ryan Wright with the Delaware State Police served as Chief Investigative Officer.

An argument between cousins over a \$40 debt has led to a shooting and a guilty plea. Deputy Attorneys General Timothy Maguire and Colleen Durkin secured a plea from Sequoyah Harris, 41, of Newark, for shooting Clifton Armstead. In October 2018, Armstead texted his cousin about repaying a debt. The two began to argue via text message before Harris told Armstead to see him at his home in Newark. When Armstead arrived, Harris, who was standing outside, took a .357-caliber gun from his pocket and shot Armstead once in the abdomen

before fleeing. Sequoyah Harris pled guilty to Assault First Degree and Possession of a Firearm During the Commission of a Felony, and faces a minimum mandatory 7 years in prison when sentenced in July. New Castle County Police Department Detective John Mancuso, and DOJ paralegal Lisa Loikith and social worker Crystal Pitts assisted with the case.